

The University of Chicago

THE TREATMENT OF LANDSCAPE
IN THE NOVELISTS OF THE
GENERATION OF 1898

A PART OF A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED
TO THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF
THE HUMANITIES IN CANDIDACY FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF ROMANCE LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES

1933

By
ROSA SEELEMAN

Private Edition, Distributed by
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO LIBRARIES
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Reprinted from
HISPANIC REVIEW
Vol. IV, No. 3, July, 1936

The University of Chicago

THE TREATMENT OF LANDSCAPE
IN THE NOVELISTS OF THE
GENERATION OF 1898

A PART OF A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED
TO THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF
THE HUMANITIES IN CANDIDACY FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF ROMANCE LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES

1933

By
ROSA SEELEMAN

Private Edition, Distributed by
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO LIBRARIES
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Reprinted from
HISPANIC REVIEW
Vol. IV, No. 3, July, 1936

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026



THE TREATMENT OF LANDSCAPE IN THE NOVELISTS OF THE GENERATION OF 1898

IN the year 1918 Pío Baroja declared that the novel is "un saco donde cabe todo,"¹ a conception revolutionary enough to represent the attitude of the Generation of 1898, in spite of the fact that he disclaims literary kinship with that group.² His good-humored definition is a justification of a trait long established in his own works: an admittedly excessive fondness for landscape. In this respect he is not unique. His friend Azorín goes so far as to imply that a novelist's merit depends on his feeling for Nature and for the *paisaje*. These moderns set forth a new conception of the novel: it is a loosely knit type of composition, plotless, not necessarily logical, and composed of all the aspects of man's daily life and environment.³ An important element of this broadly defined genre is *sentimiento de la naturaleza*, closely allied with a tendency to treat landscape very fully. Thus, while Nature has long been considered a theme for lyric poetry,⁴ it is now a topic of prime importance for the novel as well.

Paisaje is properly a pictorial term. Gómez de Baquero attempts to determine exactly what the subject-matter may be:

Así pues, el paisaje es la representación artística ya en nuestro interior, ya en el lienzo (y por extensión en una composición literaria), de un medio natural, primitivamente del campo, y luego, por ampliación del concepto, de otros lugares que no sean enteramente rústicos. El asunto del paisaje es, como dice la Academia, un terreno, un trozo de la tierra, un lugar en que podría morar el hombre, y adonde puede llegar su visión artística; pero siempre un lugar o medio natural.⁵

His definition emphasizes the *medio natural*, the rural type of land-

¹ *Páginas escogidas* (Madrid, Calleja [1918]), p. 11.

² See *Divagaciones apasionadas* (Madrid, Rafael Caro Raggio [1924]), p. 27.

³ Yuste, *raisonneur* of the author, gives his oft quoted definition in *La voluntad* (Barcelona, Henrich y Cía., 1902), p. 100.

The theories followed by Baroja and Azorín are a reflex from French realism. The inconsequent nature of life, and therefore of the novel, was postulated by Maupassant in the *Préface* of *Pierre et Jean*.

⁴ There is, for example, Brunetière's well known division of lyric themes into love, nature, and death. Also, see Victor de Laprade, *Histoire du sentiment de la nature: Prolégomènes* (Paris, Didier et Cie. [1882]), p. 122.

⁵ "Del paisaje en la novela," *Cultura española*, I (1915), 383.

scape, in which man or the handiwork of man is either lacking or decidedly subordinate in importance.

As a rule the use of *paisaje* in a novel presupposes some sort of explicit *sentimiento de la naturaleza*, as well as a recognition of the possibilities in landscape as the inspiration for a type of literary exercise. *Sentimiento de la naturaleza*, or feeling for Nature has been defined by Victor de Laprade as " . . . l'intelligence des symboles naturels, la sympathie qui attire l'homme vers les autres créatures et le pousse à la contemplation de l'univers." ⁶

Any feeling for Nature, together with the out-of-doors descriptions that it entails, depends on an observational and speculative faculty, which in turn is fostered to a considerable extent by culture and unhurried living. Modern psychology and sociology have cast new light on the reasons for man's interest in Nature. There are solitary souls who read into her face a responsiveness to their inner needs that human society for various reasons denies them. Others, on the contrary, may cultivate Nature deliberately, with eagerness or nonchalance, in order to analyze new emotions and sensations that she may afford. Finally, of the more meditative, some, by a process of anthropocentric rationalization, see in her phenomena a positive proof of immortality; others, by an impersonal detached observation of these same phenomena, confirm their disbelief in God and in man's high destiny alike.

Important in the novelistic *paisaje* is that manifestation of Nature feeling known as "pathetic fallacy," in which the interpretation of Nature is based on a paradoxical and undemonstrable bond of sympathy between the personal, which is ephemeral, and the non-personal, which endures. Henri-Frédéric Amiel's statement that "un paysage quelconque est un état d'âme" ⁷ furnishes the clue to such emotional objectification of self. The sheer indifference of Nature is responsible for the error: she has no means of resisting, and allows us complete liberty in interpreting her.

⁶ *Le Sentiment de la nature chez les modernes*. Deuxième éd. (Paris, Didier et Cie., 1907), p. 12. It is in part because of Laprade's religious bias that Alfred Biese in *Die Entwicklung des Naturgefühls im Mittelalter und in der Neuzeit*, Zweite Ausgabe (Leipzig, Verlag von Veit und Comp., 1892), p. 230, n. 2, dismisses his work as insignificant, in spite of its orderly and comprehensive nature.

In 1898 Ganivet, closely in sympathy with the Generation of 1898, discusses this *sentimiento* under an entirely different aspect, using it as an equivalent of "human" nature, and expressing in his definition the importance of heredity and environment. See the *Epistolario de Angel Ganivet*, 2. ed. (Madrid, Librería general de Victoriano Suárez, 1919), p. 214.

⁷ *Fragments d'un journal intime*, I, 31 octobre, 1852.

Spanish literature has evidenced a feeling for Nature as a decorative background for human activity ever since the author of the *Razón de amor* described a warm April day on which two lovers of the *pastourelle* type sought relief from the heat in the shade of an olive tree in a meadow, where there was a cool spring surrounded by salvia, roses, lilies, and violets. Nor is this the only example, even from the dawn of Spanish literature. But early lyric, bucolic, and allegorical writings recognize Nature because the various literary formulae demand it.⁸ Even in Luis de León Nature is a conventionalized spiritual and physical stimulant, endowed with symbolic values.⁹ As time passes the formulae continue to be repeated, with occasional evidences of renewed vigor. The artificial, bucolic Nature of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is replaced by the pantheistically conceived Nature of the nineteenth century.

Eventually Nature became the subject of first hand observation. In the year 1844 "dibujo del paisaje" was recognized apparently for the first time as a separate branch of art instruction in Spain.¹⁰ Furthermore, in that same year was published Enrique Gil's *Señor de Bembibre*, the novel that marks the beginning of the modern phase of the use of landscape. Description of place had been an element of some importance in *costumbrista* literature. There, however, the milieu was suggested or implied, rather than described in detail. In *El señor de Bembibre*, with its reminiscences of Scott¹¹ and Chateaubriand¹² regional flavor is imparted by the descriptions of the mountains and marches of the Bierzo in León, especially of Lake Carrecedo, with specific mention of local flora and fauna.¹³ A sentimental bond between man and the out-of-doors is presupposed;

⁸ That the first case of description of Nature for its own sake is first found in the *Journal* of Columbus has been pointed out by Alexander von Humboldt, *Kosmos* (Stuttgart und Tübingen, I. G. Cotta, 1847), II, 54 ff.

⁹ In *Los nombres de Cristo*, for example (*Biblioteca de autores españoles*, XXVII, 69, 88, et passim), his use of Nature is in the manner of the Italian humanists. Compare with the countryside vista in the dialogue found in *Hieronymi Fracastorii veronensis, Opera omnia* (Venetiis, apud Iuntas, 1555), pp. 153r ff.

¹⁰ A. de Beruete y Moret, *Historia de la pintura española en el siglo XIX* (Madrid, Ruiz hermanos, 1926), p. 67.

¹¹ See E. A. Peers, "Studies in the Influence of Sir Walter Scott in Spain," *Revue Hispanique*, LXVIII (1926), 1 ff.

¹² Gil admits an indebtedness to the great French romanticist, J. R. Lomba y Pedraja, "Enrique Gil y Carrasco: su vida y su obra literaria," *Revista de Filología Española*, II (1915), 152.

¹³ Lomba y Pedraja (*loc. cit.*, p. 139), credits Gil with being the "primer paisajista" of his generation, and with revealing a distinct regional quality.

nevertheless Gil has a real feeling for Nature, and senses the novelistic possibilities in landscape.

Fernán Caballero rejuvenates the novel, writing with a literary consciousness that is new in Spain. Although she is exceedingly observant of the multiple sensory appeal of the *paisaje*, her sentimentality, her assumption of teleological intent in Nature, and her tendency to insert non-descriptive detail, detract from her landscapes. Palacio Valdés achieves fine marine views in *José* and in *Marta y María*. Commonplace naturalness and sincerity mark his descriptions. In Pardo Bazán's *Madre Naturaleza* we find a tendency to make the physical picture support the psychological developments. In order to make credible an unconscious receptivity on the part of the leading characters to the processes and influences of Nature, she fills in the scene with concrete information about organic growth in animals and plants, which becomes a deterministic factor in the lives of the two children. When she forgets determinism she sketches magnificent *paisajes*.¹⁴ Pereda's strong point is his ability to render the sublime aspects of Nature. He is the patriotic novelist of the Montaña, and looks on Nature and its external manifestations as the awesome handiwork of God. Finally, in her richly varied aspects Nature is a challenge to the literary powers and ingenuity of Blasco Ibáñez. He revels in landscape, recording the *sensations d'ensemble* with exuberance and exaggeration. Color and odor "symphonies," reminiscent of Zola, appear in his works.¹⁵ Nor are his descriptions always pertinent. Perhaps the most striking case of intrusive descriptive detail is to be found in the pages devoted to the aquarium of Naples in *Mare nostrum*. Here the author apparently inserts entire pages copied from an encyclopedia.

In keeping with the literary sponsorship foisted upon the experimental sciences, the general trend is toward objectivity, impassivity. But not even the most objective writers of the antecedent period nor of the Generation of 1898 present Nature as an absolutely impersonal force: all make concessions to man's instinctive grasp for a hold on her seeming permanence.

The Generation of 1898, confident and subversive in their sheer youthfulness, were strengthened in their resolve to break away from the past as a result of national disaster. In their iconoclasm they

¹⁴ The description of the plateau of Castro in *Madre Naturaleza*, *Obras completas* (Madrid, V. Prieto y Cía., 1910), IV, 253 ff., will serve as an illustration.

¹⁵ *Arroz y tartana* (Valencia, Madrid, F. Sempere y Cía., s.a.), pp. 150 ff.; 173 ff.

set new values on literary types: three of them, Baroja, Azorín, and Unamuno fostered what was for Spain a new realism in the novel, while a fourth one, Valle-Inclán, emphasized a precious new style, less original, perhaps, than he would have us believe, but none the less revolutionary. *Paisaje* is a notable feature of the works of Baroja, Valle-Inclán, and Azorín.

There has been much comment on Baroja's treatment of landscape. The author's northern origin, his life-long interest in the out-of-doors, and also the fact that he is not at ease in society, where his temperament sets up a defense mechanism of irritability, may be responsible for the prominence of the *paisaje* in his novels.¹⁶

In spite of the lack of coherence in the presentation of his ideas, it can be seen that Nature has considerable interest for the author. Evidence is gathered bit by bit, often from a context in which one would not expect to find it. Baroja permits himself no illusions, and disapproves of people who lose themselves in helpless admiration before Nature. She is totally indifferent; before her man is caged and helpless. Nevertheless, in order to heighten emotional coloring, Baroja makes frequent use of consonance and dissonance between mood in man and mood in Nature, and sees in the evanescence of cloud or sea-foam the symbol of man's impermanence.

Practically all the out-of-doors is pictured in Baroja: mountains, lowlands, plains, marine views, towns, and cities are shown in their varied regional and seasonal aspects, most frequently through the eyes of an ambulant protagonist, questing for some lost or unknown good. Some of his characters, especially the professional painters,¹⁷

¹⁶ De Onís ("Pío Baroja," *Nosotros*, LIV, 1921, 171-82), sees his main tendency as ultra-realistic impressionism. "Un Velázquez de la novela" is the designation given him by Andrenio, who is specially interested in the human element in the Barojan scene, and specifically declares that the description of the harbor of Marseilles in *El laberinto de las sirenas* represents the author's finest work. (*De Gallardo a Unamuno*, Madrid, 1926, p. 271.) The *Camino de perfección*, with its leisurely sight-seeing, and rapid, detached sketches, has attracted much attention, not always favorable, needless to say. Ricardo Carreras ("Los novelistas nuevos," *Cultura española*, I, 1909, 199), comments on the equation between the conflict in the soul of Fernando and his constantly varying environment. John Dos Passos says: "... the natural history that gives the pictures etched with vitriol of Spanish life . . . which you get in these novels of Baroja's is very near the highest sort of creation . . ." (*Rosinante to the Road Again*, New York, Knopf [1922], p. 99).

¹⁷ One of the recurrent episodic characters in Baroja is the painter. Mister Bothwell, eccentric English *arbitrista* in *El mayorazgo de Labraz*, J. H. Thompson of "El convento de Monsant" and Larrañaga, protagonist of *Agonías de nuestro tiempo*, are among the more important. There are many others.

are gifted observers: the others have much the same type of receptivity for the scene that lies before them. Out of a welter of impressions the descriptive pattern includes relief, color massing, movement, varied sensory appeal, and often an emotional interpretation on the part of the beholder.

It is especially the mountainous *paisaje* of the Basque countries and Castile in which Baroja excels. In picturesque relief one against the other lowland and highland alternate endlessly before the eyes of the characters. The lengthy passage beginning as follows illustrates his descriptive technique:

Una ingente montaña, cubierta en su falda de retamares y jarales florecidos, se levantaba frente a ellos; brotaba sola, separada de otras muchas, desde el fondo de una cóncava hondonada, y al subir y ascender enhiesta, las plantas iban escaseando en su superficie y terminaba en su parte alta aquella mole de granito como muralla lisa o peñón tajado y desnudo, coronado en la cumbre por multitud de riscos, de afiladas aristas, de pedrujos rotos y de agujas delgadas como chapiteles de una catedral.

En lo hondo del valle, al pie de la montaña, veíanse por todas partes grandes piedras esparcidas y rotas, como si hubieran sido rajadas a martillazos; los titanes, constructores de aquel paredón ciclópeo, habían dejado abandonados en la tierra los bloques que no les sirvieron.

Sólo algunos pinos escalaban, bordeando torrenteras y barrancos, la cima de la montaña.

Por encima de ella, nubes algodonosas, de una blancura deslumbrante, pasaban con rapidez.

A Fernando le recordaba aquel paisaje alguno de los sugestivos e irreales paisajes de Patinir.¹⁸

The general physical plan presents clear and vivid impression of line and color. Chief importance is given the single mountain beyond a deep valley chaotically rocky, and far beyond is the range of the Gredos. Other pictorial touches are added by fleeting clouds overhead, the shadows cast on the valley, colors of the vegetation, and the fantastically brilliant pageantry of sunset colors that fade into the pallor of moonlight. There is characteristic attempt to designate hues and shades carefully. Odor and tactile sensations are briefly mentioned. Sound is specifically indicated. The synthetic impression is summed up in the words "Era una sinfonía voluptuosa de colores, de olores, y de sonidos." The use of metaphor, of simile, of emotional effect, and the detached, syncopated style, are all noteworthy.

Since the novels containing most descriptions have ambulant

¹⁸ *Camino de perfección* (Madrid, Renacimiento, 1913), pp. 83 ff.

characters, the landscapes through which they pass are presented from the progressive point of view. Baroja's heroes often stop in bewildered admiration to dream away the day. They lie in the grass for hours, intent on the blue of the sky, the shifting cloud shapes and the configuration and colorings of Nature around them. Again, the point of view shifts, so that the scene is conditioned by both the progress of time and the space traversed by the wanderers. Baroja never wearies of recording visual impressions; each new scene has special consideration: one follows the other in endless array. Mountains, high at a distance, flatten out as one nears: meadows come into view in the valleys, are passed and replaced by others. The *paisaje* becomes a sort of moving picture.

Baroja's descriptive pattern, his leisurely sight-seeing, his bulk of descriptive detail, have a casual recording of impressions that is unmatched in Spanish literature. Planless, helter-skelter, fast as the senses can note and the pen can write, come myriad details that crowd one another on the page, so simultaneous is their observation, so kaleidoscopic their variety. As a result of his notorious disregard for style and technique, which is balanced by a capacity for patient and minute observation, trivial detail is side by side with vivid pictorial stroke, concretely named object with vague suggestion, prosaic definiteness with imaginative appeal, especially through suggestive simile.

The second distinguishing quality of the Barojan canvas is his pictorial manner of envisaging the subject of his descriptions. Scattered about throughout his descriptive passages are endless details which show that the pictorial standard is uppermost in his mind, and, to a considerable extent, influences his moods and interpretations.¹⁹ The entire mood of the lengthy description mentioned above is set by the statement: "A Fernando le recordaba aquel paisaje alguno de los sugestivos e irreales paisajes de Patinir."

Baroja uses description in the name of realism to complete man's milieu: also to set off his narrative intervals. Aiming at detachment of self from content, he resorts to a dry recording of fact, a Flaubertian impersonality, that is at times broken through by a lyric or emotional note. It is especially when the canvas is filled with

¹⁹ That Baroja had training in painting is not disclosed in the facts available concerning his life, but his brother Ricardo is an etcher and portrait painter. A. G. Temple, *Modern Spanish Painting* (London, A. Fairbairns and Co., 1908), p. 132. See also *Juventud, egolatría* (Madrid, Caro Raggio, 1917), p. 265. Baroja frequently compares natural scenery with paintings by Titian, Patinir, Boecklin, and Watteau. In his various works he gives considerable space to abstract discussions on painting, and, as usual, is captious and arbitrary in his judgments.

human figures that we are tempted to find protest implicit against brutality, inertia, stupidity, and filth, but all is recorded with the impassivity of the clinic physician who has trained himself away from compassion. Baroja reveals no remedy for the problems about him, but reacts in the direction of simplicity. Selecting a few tormented characters, he makes the open road the stabilizer of their souls. A simplification of man's wants, and therefore of his problems, can be effected by Nature.

The points of divergence between the temperaments and literary practices of two figures such as Pío Baroja and Ramón del Valle-Inclán are necessarily numerous and pronounced. We find an illustration of this in a comparison of their use of landscape. Baroja, to recapitulate, has an indiscriminate inclusion of detail, an objectivity in transmitting the scene to the page that is almost photographic, a frank and intimate acquaintance with what it is convenient to term the realities of life, and a pervasive doubt that the earth and the fulness thereof were created for man's benefit by any just and indulgent deity. In sharp contrast with these traits are Valle-Inclán's esoteric norms for literary form and content, the infusion of a strong personal note into his reproduction of the landscape, so strong, in fact, that one is tempted to reverse the proportion and to see a strong infusion of landscape into the portrayal of his individualism, a characteristic refusal to deal compassionately with humanity in large numbers, and a formal religious orthodoxy.

Under protest of originality Valle-Inclán has concealed extensive appropriations from other authors.²⁰ One meritorious phase of his writings however, is indisputably original: his Galician landscapes. It is when he writes of Galicia that, as even Julio Casares admits, he reveals his "verdadera e íntima personalidad."²¹

Specifically, Valle-Inclán's criterion for the selection of details from the physical environment is the pictorial and emotional enhancement of nicely determined esthetic effects. He lifts himself into a fastidious mood, and seeks out the exotic, the rare, as a means of self-expression. The reader is always aware of the courting of mood and emotion. Here is no portrayal of a beloved or familiar or impressive out-of-doors for its own sake. Inanimate Nature, especially the desert, is a means of spiritual refuge, an agent con-

²⁰ His critics have adduced considerable evidence of unacknowledged borrowings. See especially Julio Casares, *Crítica profana* (Madrid, Imprenta colonial, 1916), pp. 125 ff.

²¹ R. Cansinos Assens (*La literatura nueva*, Madrid, Sanz Calleja, s.a.), 1, 120, and Azorín in the suggestive pages devoted to Valle-Inclán in *El paisaje de España*, comment on the Galician author as a *paisajista*.

ducive to mystic quietism.²² At rare intervals one finds a pantheistic note.²³ His more typical *paisaje*, on the other hand, is a spectacle that affords a harmonious physical and spiritual background for incident or emotion. Whether it is a static scene or a changing panorama, it is uniformly one with the action or character projected upon it. The rural panorama which portrays external Nature because of its identity with man, is at its best in *Flor de santidad*.

In the following passage we have a perfect setting for the mystically candid Adegá, who is prophesying that some day it will be recognized that the pilgrim who sought charity was Christ in person, testing an evil generation:

¡Algún día se sabrá! ¡Algún día se sabrá!

Parecía una iluminada llena de gracia saludadora. El sol naciente se levantaba sobre su cabeza como para un largo día de santidad. En la cima nevada de los montes temblaba el rosado vapor del alba como gloria seráfica. La campiña se despertaba bajo el oro y la púrpura del amanecer que la vestía con una capa pluvial: la capa pluvial del gigantesco San Cristóbal, desprendida de sus hombros solemnes. Los aromas de las eras verdes esparcíanse en el aire como alabanzas de una vida aldeana, remota y feliz. En el fondo de las praderas el agua detenida en remansos, esmaltaba flores de plata: rosas y lises de la heráldica celestial que sabe la leyenda de los Reyes Magos y los amores ideales de las santas princesas. En una lejanía de niebla azul se perfilaban los cipreses de San Clodio Mártir, rodeando el Santuario, oscuros y pensativos en el descendimiento angélico de aquel amanecer, con las cimas mustias ungidas en el ámbar dorado de la luz.²⁴

Here the *paisaje* is one single thing with Adegá and seems to participate in her life as she moves about on it. So thorough is the identification that the parts of the landscape, sun, snow-capped mountains, mists, pools in the valleys, cypresses, and flowers all bear a heavy burden of stately allusion to sacred abstractions inspired by his conception of the devout girl. Illustrative of these are "largo día de santidad," "gloria seráfica," "heráldica celestial," "descendimiento angélico." Nature encourages Adegá's naïve mysticism, and the graceful unctuousness of descriptive passages such as the above goes far to make us accept her hallucinations.

In another description, a moonlight scene, Valle-Inclán selects

²² *Lámpara maravillosa*, *Opera omnia* I (Madrid, Artes de la ilustración, s.a.), 94 f.

²³ See *Gerifaltes de antaño* (Madrid, Victoriano Suárez, 1909), p. 59.

²⁴ *Flor de santidad*, *Opera omnia* II (Madrid, Imprenta helénica, 1913), pp. 52-54.

impressionistically those elements of the environment that will aid in striking a mood of fear and mystery. Adega and the *ventera*, wishing to undo the evil spell that is causing the sheep to die one by one, have obeyed the orders of the *saludador*, and driven the flock one midnight to drink of the waters of San Gundián.

Adega sacó las ovejas al campo. Era una noche de montaña, clara y silenciosa, blanca por la luna. Las ovejas se juntaban en mitad del descampado como destinadas a un sacrificio en aquellas piedras célticas que doraban líquenes milenarios. La vieja y la zagala bajaron por el sendero: el rebaño se apretaba con tímido balido y el tremante campanilleo de las esquilas despertaba un eco en los montes lejanos donde dormían los lobos. El perro caminaba al flanco, fiero y roncador, espeluznado el cuello en torno del ancho dogal guarnecido de hierros. La ventera llevaba encendido un hachón de paja, porque el fuego arredrase a los lobos. Las dos mujeres caminaban en silencio, sobrecogidas por la soledad de la noche y por el misterio de aquel maleficio que las llevaba a la fuente de San Gundián.²⁵

In the scene of which the above passage is the beginning, there is a striking use of light and shadow. Dim light from a waning moon, flickering torches, ominous murmur of brook, groaning winds, all accentuate the lonely and the sinister. A fitting climax is a detail that the moon watches intently to see whether or not the miracle comes to pass.

These two are representative of the finest descriptive passages in Valle-Inclán. It will be seen that line, contour, relief, and topographical detail are of secondary importance. But the scene is so compact of sound, movement, and emotion that the scarcity of concrete detail passes unnoticed.

The subjectivity of the works of Valle-Inclán is attained through his style. One is early aware of the author's personality. His temperament intrudes in allusion, archaic comparison, and rhetorical harmony, which invest what he sees with romantic or idealistic glamour.²⁶ There is considerable monotony in his mannered rhetorical embroidery, but the investiture of the commonplace with uncommon suggestive and evocative power is the result of fine artistry.

Considering next Azorín, genial philosopher of the Generation of 1898, we find that he has a significant definition of *paisaje*. He equates it with the spirit of man: " . . . el paisaje somos nosotros:

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 87-90.

²⁶ An enumeration of the virtues that he wishes to imply in his word choice is to be found in *Lámpara maravillosa*, pp. 170 ff.

el paisaje es nuestro espíritu, sus melancolías, sus placideces, sus anhelos, sus tártagos.”²⁷ He sees in all that surrounds him an “esencia lejana y multiple de las cosas,” which he interprets subjectively to his readers.

Yuste, his *raisonneur*, is made to evaluate writers in proportion to the prominence in their works of what Azorín designates as nature feeling:

Lo que da la medida de un artista es su sentimiento de la naturaleza, del paisaje. . . . Un escritor será tanto más artista cuanto mejor sepa interpretar la *emoción del paisaje*. . . . Para mí el paisaje es el grado más alto del arte literario.²⁸

One has only to consult *Al margen de los clásicos*, *España*, and *El paisaje de España* to be convinced that Azorín prefers novelists whose talents lie in description. This illuminating trait has gained for him both abuse and praise at the hands of critics.

The needs of man, seeking for something permanent for his ephemeral self in the eternity of time and matter, are at the basis of Azorín's feeling for Nature. Thus to ponder in solemn if not original strain over the immensities of Nature is characteristic of him: he is constantly reminded of the “inmensidad del tiempo y del sucederse inacabable, eterno de los hombres y de las cosas.”

The absence of plot, the cognition of varied sensory impressions, the fugitive effect of color in changing light, are recorded in much the same manner as in Baroja. And yet Azorín is less restrained in the presence of Nature. His delight is expressed frankly, with much exclamation:

Caminábamos por una elevada montaña. Ibamos un mi amigo y yo. Era en verano. La mañana estaba radiante. Soplaban un ligero viento que traía olores de plantas silvestres: tomillo, romero, cantueso. No se escuchaba en el profundo silencio, sino el piar, de tarde en tarde, de un pajarillo que triscaba entre los matorrales. Caminábamos lentamente. Nos deteníamos a contemplar el tejido sutil de una arañita, puesto en un lentisco; cogíamos florecitas azules de cantueso y las estregábamos en la palma de la mano; señoreábamos, desde un empinado berrueco, toda la inmensidad del panorama. ¡Qué variedad de campiñas y colinas atalayábamos allá bajo! Hemos llegado a un raso de la montaña. Se hace aquí como un agostadero en que los ganados deben de sestar. Desde aquí tendidos sobre la suave hierba, espaciábamos la vista por el paisaje. ¡Dulces horas de grato descanso! Atrás, en la populosa y turbulenta urbe, quedan las concupiscencias, las pasiones, las mezquindades. Aquí

²⁷ *La voluntad* (Barcelona, Henrich y Cía., 1902), p. 95.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

está el aire sutil, limpísimo; el aroma no pasado por alquitares; el silencio no turbado por máquinas ni gritos. ¡Dulce, dulce haronía! ²⁹

In the passage beginning thus, a veritable apology for idlers, we feel the writer's intimate contact with Nature. The Horatian suggestion of the ethical influence of rural life, and its superiority over city life, is noteworthy. There is an effect of great distances: the canvas is too enormous for detailed reproduction of the scene. Picturesque variety, color, sound, odor, exhilarating mood, all in all, the passage in its entirety represents the author's spontaneous reaction to a bright out-of-doors, in which he may botanize or dream at his ease. In certain instances Azorín describes by enumerating, giving what Cejador calls a notarial inventory of a scene.³⁰ This is especially true of his interiors.

Azorín combines Baroja's colorist tendencies with Valle-Inclán's interest in the aural element. Nowhere is Azorín's vocabulary more precise. Onomatopoeic words occur: on a hot day the cigarras shrill an endless *ras-ras*, the *rana* cries *croá-croá*, and seven adjectives are used to describe the notes of cocks crowing in concert.³¹

As is the case in Baroja, multiple sensorial appeal is facilitated by leisurely description, in which the location is observed over a period of time: not merely as it looks at a given moment. Relief is altered, light varies, and new colors, sounds and odors enter the pattern. Azorín's characteristic trait consists of the introduction of a profoundly meditative but scarcely original note: the riddle of the universe and the destiny of the individual man. He has majesty and solemnity of expression, touched off at the sight of wave, cloud, or distant light. Also, Azorín has been able to revive the past purposefully. On a stray phrase from the classics he builds up a detailed picture, as if to recall to "caduca España" a consciousness of her latent self. In Castile he beholds the most significant section of Spain:

¿No está en estas iglesias, en estos calvarios, en estas ermitas, en estos conventos, en este cielo seco, en este campo duro y raso, toda nuestra alma, todo el espíritu intenso y enérgico de nuestra raza? ³²

In her scenery he sees reënacted entire pages from Quevedo and Cervantes. This is the most direct statement of the symbolism of

²⁹ *El chirrión de los políticos*, 2. ed. (Madrid, Caro Raggio, 1931), pp. 11 ff.

³⁰ *Historia de la lengua y literatura castellana*, X (Madrid, Tip. de la "Rev. de Arch. Bibl. y Museos," 1919), p. 301.

³¹ *La voluntad*, p. 9.

³² *España, hombres y paisajes* (Madrid, F. Beltrán, 1909), p. 163.

the *paisaje* that may be found in these three authors: it is complementary to the author's previously quoted definition of landscape.

To summarize, realistic description is a very modern development in the Spanish novel. The trait of realism, innate in the Spaniard, early manifested itself in characterization and event, but, as far as milieu was concerned, it remained idealized or allegorical for a surprisingly long time. The Generation of 1898, bent on renovation, apply the corrective.

The three authors mentioned above preserve individualism in their treatment of landscape. Baroja, renowned alike for earnestness and for poor syntax, travels widely over Spain, has the most varied experience, and the most sustained preoccupation with the gloomier aspects of life. But he trusts Nature and sees her richly; her varied phases, her fugitive colorings, noted at all hours and in all seasons, with or without the presence of man, are completely presented. What he lacks in subtlety and in finish of style he gains in instant clarity. However, he photographs only the exterior.

In spite of moments of inclination toward pantheism and mysticism Valle-Inclán prefers to externalize more personal emotions and sensations in the scenery about him. Mood, connotation, and suggestion prevail over concrete physical detail. Nevertheless, in *Flor de santidad*, under the suave and poetic glamour which the physical picture is given, he imparts a distinct notion of a brutal, crafty peasantry, instinct with superstition, naturally fitting into the misty, wonder-working Nature of rural Galicia.

Azorín, meditative and subjective, sees the most complete picture. He is the greatest *paisajista* of the three, not only because of the minute care with which his landscapes are described, but also because of the relation of his *paisajes* to the individual and their practical symbolism with reference to the Spanish nation.

ROSA SEELEMAN

Chicago Junior College

